Groups use grants to reach minority gay youth

by DAVID GOLDMAN

Activists with the groups Second Sunday and ZAMI say that grants from the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation are helping them better serve the needs of metro gay and lesbian youth of color.

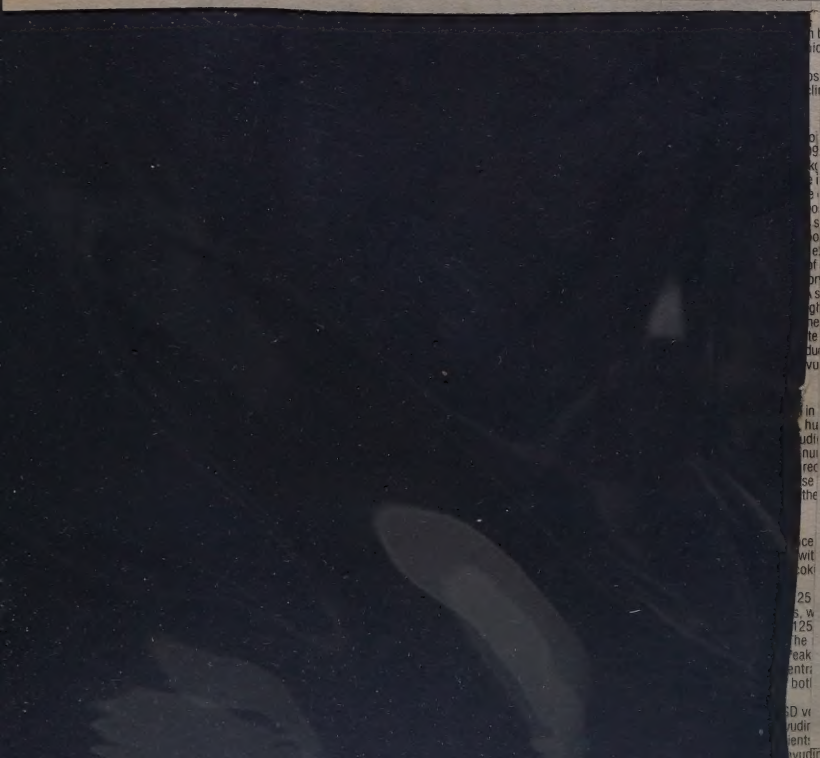
Last fall the MACF's Lesbian & Gay Funding Initiative for Youth awarded $8,000 to ZAMI and $6,000 to Second Sunday.

ZAMI President Mary Anne Adams said the group is using $5,000 to launch an outreach program for lesbians and bisexual women on the Atlanta University Center campus. "We are bringing these women off campus to a safe space where they can dialogue with each other, affirm and empower themselves, and talk about issues around their sexuality and their identity," she said. Carla Rabb is the group's facilitator.

The group, Just AU Women, meets every first and third Saturday from noon until 2 p.m. at Indigo Arts Gallery & Playhouse, 1850 DeKalb Ave. On April 7, the group will conduct a panel discussion on religion and lesbian issues at the Camille Cosby Academic Center at Spelman College.

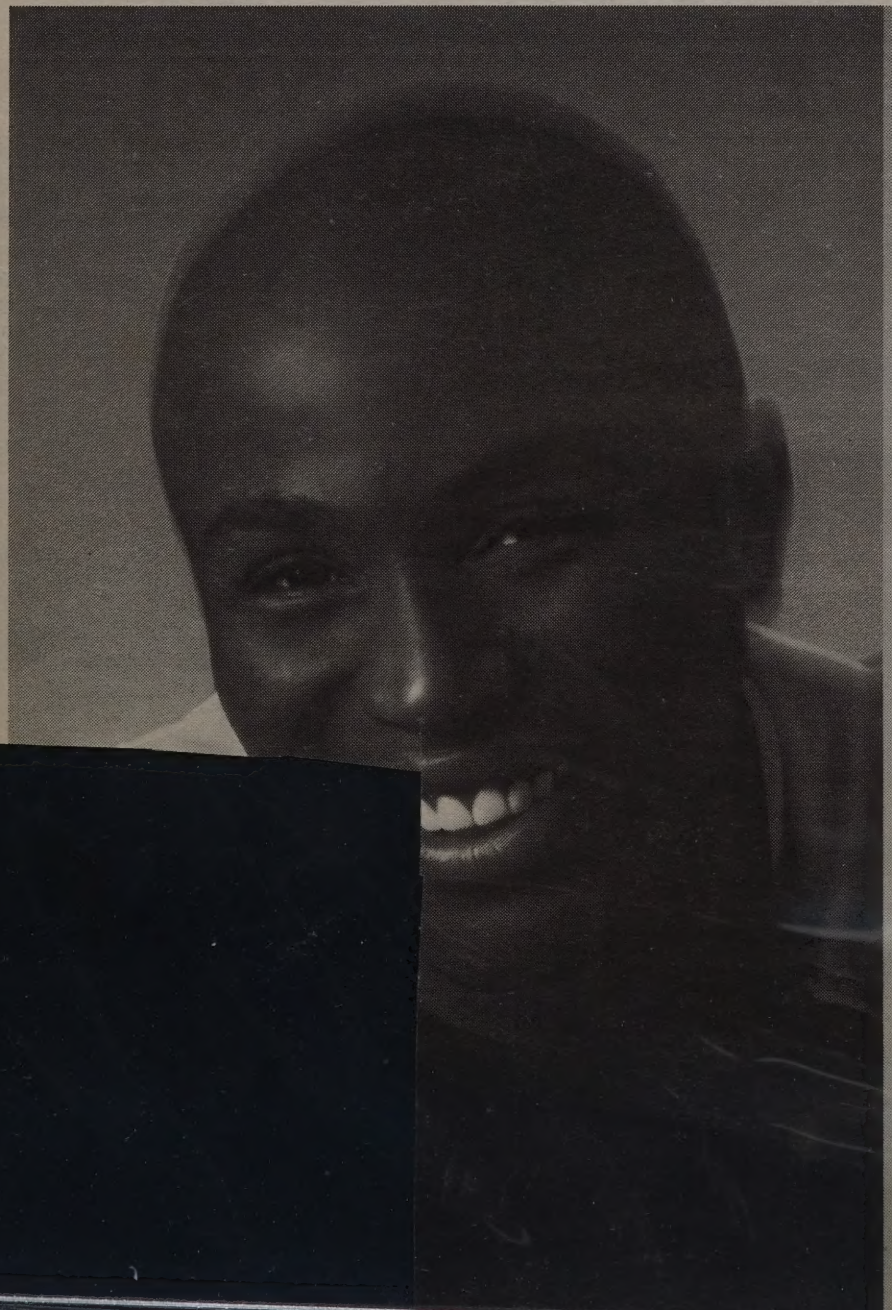
ZAMI is using the remaining $3,000 to administer its scholarship program for lesbians of African descent. Adams said ZAMI is the only lesbian group in the nation with such a program and continues to solicit funds for it. Donations may be sent to the Fund for Southern Communities, marked for ZAMI, at P.O. Box 2502, Decatur, Ga. 30031. Applications, which are due in by April 15, may be obtained by calling (404) 370-0920. For information on Just AU Women, call (404) 370-0911.

Carla Rabb is outreach facilitator with Just AU Women.



Craig Washington, Second Sunday co-chair, said that organization is using its $6,000 MACF grant to start a group for gay and bisexual African-American men age 17-24. Called My Brother's Keeper, the group meets every third Sunday at 6:30 p.m. at the Auburn Avenue African American Research Library, although the March 15 meeting will take place at the Atlanta Lambda Center, 828 W. Peachtree St. Call (404) 325-7321.

Keiron Williams, a coordinator of My Brother's Keeper, said the group's purpose is to provide young men with support as well as a social outlet. "Queer youth of African descent need some place where they can identify themselves and their culture." He noted that men who live "closeted and ashamed of their sexuality are more likely to fall into abusive relationships and get taken advantage of." Williams added, "HIV rates are still skyrocketing in our community. Principally, that's because we won't talk about what's necessary to do, as far as health is concerned."



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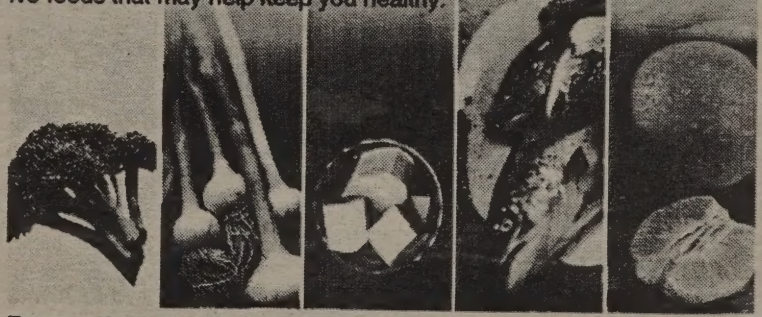

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STELLA WILDER

YOUR ST

By Stella Wilder

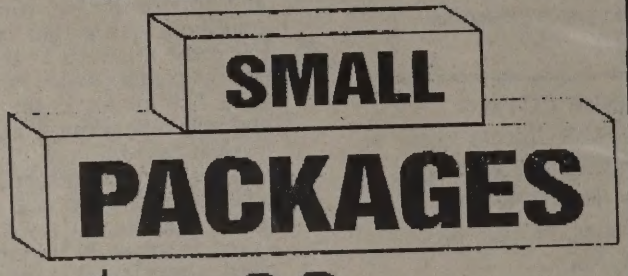
The coming week may see a great many individuals feeling distinctly uncomfortable this week — and the reasons for this will not be easy to discern or to understand. Those, however, who look for external causes at this time are very likely chasing after that which doesn't really exist; one is far more likely to understand what is going on this week — emotionally and spiritually — after taking a good long look within. The mirror holds the answers at this time — but not the one which hangs on the wall! The mirror in the heart can and will reveal many secrets this week, if asked.

This may prove an uncharacteristic week for young people, as many may feel they are being asked to grow up too quickly. Indeed, everyone this week can afford to slow down just a bit, keeping the pace constant but under control. What one does and says this week matters greatly in small ways.

ARIES (March 21-April 4) — That which is easy and inexpensive can prove quite valuable to you all week long — and well into the future, too! Don't ignore the obvious. **(April 5-April 19)** — You're going to have to take a more hands-on approach this week. Don't be so standoffish.

TAURUS (April 20-May 5) — Your job may require you to take a far more objective look at yourself and your own recent performance. Perhaps some changes are in order. **(May 6-May 20)** — You're after a brighter future, and late in the week you may receive a hint which can guide you well.

THINGS COME IN



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